



## News From Congressman Bill Delahunt

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### **DELAHUNT HAILS PASSAGE OF LEGISLATION TO LIFT PASSPORT BACKLOG**

Washington, D.C. – Congressman Bill Delahunt hailed passage of legislation to alleviate the huge backlog of passport applications that has frustrated millions of travelers.

“This year’s new passport application requirements have created gridlock in the federal bureaucracy and panic for millions of Americans making their vacation plans” said Delahunt.

This week the Congress approved legislation to re-hire Foreign Service workers to help federal agencies process the huge backlog of passport applications. The bill now goes to the President who is expected to sign it.

New air travel requirements that took effect in January require passports for travelers entering the United States from Canada, Mexico and Bermuda. Since January, the number of applications has surged. The average time to receive a passport can now take between 12-14 weeks. Delahunt’s office has been flooded with calls from constituents trying to make vacation plans and frustrated with delays.

The State Department had projected demand to rise from 12 million passports last year to 16 million in 2007. However, revised projections indicate the number of applications may exceed 18 million before the year is out. Next year that number could exceed 23 million and approach 30 million by 2010.

Because of the increased demand, the federal government has hired 1,222 employees this year to process the new applications. These figures include fraud prevention staff, trainers and managers, passport adjudicators, and the contractors who perform critical non-adjudicative functions at our passport agencies.

Over 78 million Americans currently have passports – slightly more than 25 percent of all citizens. Within a few years, fully half of all Americans will have passports or passport cards.

**Constituents Can Apply for a Refund of Expedited Passport Fees**

Applicants who paid the extra charge for the expedited service can apply for a refund by contacting the State Department web site at <http://travel.state.gov> or submit a written application. Your letter should include your name, date and place of birth, and approximate date(s) you applied for your passport and received your passport (if applicable), including mailing address and phone number. This should be sent to: [refunds@passportservices@state.gov](mailto:refunds@passportservices@state.gov) or mailed to: Service Refund, Department of State, 2999 Passport PL, Washington, DC 20522-2999.